The purpose of A. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the labor, industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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SAVE FOOD—
Help Relieve
Famine Abroad

WHOLE NO. 1833 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 28, 1946 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 36, NO. 22

Opposition Mounts Against Truman's "Fascist" Draft-Labor Bill; Settlement of Coal Dispute "Imminent" As Railroad Strike Ends

Victory For United Mine Workers Is Reported As Government and Union Lawyers Draft New Contract Terms

Washington, D. C.—Settlement of the nation-wide coal strike was reported imminent as this edition went to press.

After prolonged conferences between leaders of the United Mine Workers of America and Secretary of the Interior Krug, who is directing Government operation of the mines, lawyers were called in presumably to draft a contract.

Unofficial sources indicated that the settlement is to be based on these general terms:

1—Establishment of a health and welfare fund for the coal miners to be financed by a tonnage royalty.

2—Substantial wage increases.

3—Federal enforcement of mine safety laws.

Thus the union appears to have gained almost a complete victory for its original demands.

Secretary Krug had conferred previously with the coal mine operators and it seemed certain that the settlement terms had been accepted by them.

First word of the reported coal agreement came from Capitol Hill, where Senator Claude Pepper of Florida declared there was no urgent need for haste in acting upon President Truman's drastic draft-labor bill because the railroad strike already had been ended and a settlement of the coal strike "is expected at any moment."

Senator Taft of Ohio, who reportedly had been in touch with the coal operators, confirmed Pepper's statement. He said he understood settlement of the coal dispute would be officially announced soon.

Reporters, who had waited eight hours for the conclusion of two conferences between Secretary Krug and his aides, and UMW President John L. Lewis and Vice President John O'Leary on the other, discovered more evidence of an approaching pact when the meeting broke up.

Mr. Lewis emerged silent, but smiling broadly. "A few moments later, an Interior Department spokesman quoted Secretary Krug as saying that "progress" had been achieved and that the negotiators would meet again the following day.

Then he added that union and Government lawyers would be working far into the night "on details of the . . . , er, sh . . . progress."

The newsmen were convinced he had been about to say "contract" but turned suddenly cautious.

If a new contract is negotiated, it is expected that the Government will promptly return the coal mines to private management and that normal conditions will soon be restored in the industry.

Civil Service Head Joins Congress In Crackdown On New CIO Union

Washington, D. C. — The United States Civil Service Commission joined Congress in the general crackdown on the CIO's recently created United Public Workers of America with a stern warning that any Federal workers who "actively support" the Communist policies of the new union can be released from Government employment on the grounds of questionable loyalty to this Nation.

Coming fast on the heels of a determined movement in the Senate to deny employment to members of this union because of their declaration in their constitution of the right to strike against the Government, the Civil Service Commission's announcement was regarded as a virtual death blow to the CIO group.

The double-barreled action does not affect the American Federation of Government Employes (AFL), which, in its constitution, renounces the right to strike against the Government and which recently called on the Government to remove from its payrolls any employe of doubtful loyalty to this Nation.

The views of the Commission were stated bluntly by its president Harry B. Mitchell, in a letter to Arthur Stein, international vice president of the UPWA. Stein had asked the Commission to comment on news reports in stating the Commission was planning an investigation of the union.

"The mere fact that a person attended a convention which declared that the Communists Russian Government was perfect in all respects, while the Government of the United States was imperialistic in its designs on humanity, would not, standing alone, justify a decision that the person was a Communist and that force to overthrow the government to which he normally owed allegiance, was justified," Mr. Mitchell said.

"However, such action is bound to arouse suspicion against the member, as it undoubtedly did in the case of your organization.

"Its purpose in throwing an utterly uncalled-for proverbial red rag in the face of the American public, the employer of its members, is rather difficult to understand.

"There is no question but that evidence indicating that individuals participated in the drafting of such resolutions, or actively supported the adoption of such resolutions, would be considered as relevant evidence in determining whether or not a person was following the Communist party line."

In his letter to Stein, Mr. Mitchell bluntly reminded the union that "reasonable doubt" of a person's loyalty to the Government is a basis for disqualifying an applicant for a Federal job or removal of an employe from the Federal payroll.

In this connection, Mr. Mitchell cited Section 9 (A) of the Hatch Act, which reads as follows:

"It shall be unlawful for any person employed in any capacity by any agency of the Federal Government, or any agency of any unit of which any part thereof, is paid from funds authorized or appropriated by any act of Congress, to be a member of any political party or organization which advocates the overthrow of the constitutional form of government in the United States."

Mr. Mitchell told Stein the Commission has carefully examined the constitution of the Communist party following the Communist party line and, where it found reasonable doubt of the persons' loyalty to the Government, has denied them employment or caused their dismissal.

"Experience has taught the Commission," he added, "that it is difficult to prove that a person under suspicion is a member of the Communist party. Very few Communists in the United States will admit that they are Communists. Even when the Commission has definite proof that certain persons are or have been members of the Communist party, they still dispute the fact. Therefore, the Commission has to rely on cumulative, collateral or circumstantial evidence."

At the same time Mr. Mitchell took occasion to remind workers of the new CIO union that the Commission will strictly enforce the Hatch Act provisions prohibiting solicitation of funds by Federal workers for political purposes. This section of his letter was aimed more notice against activity by a Government employe to solicit funds for the CIO's Political Action Committee.

Stassen Assails Truman Request For 'Extreme Powers' Over Labor

St. Paul, Minn.—Condemning President Truman's "emergency" labor legislation program as "totalitarian in its nature," Harold E. Stassen, former Governor of Minnesota, joined Senator Wheeler (D.) of Montana taking sharp issue with the proposal.

Stassen charged the Truman proposals go far beyond the needs of the situation and would grant powers "more extreme" than those now granted to the Government in either time of war or peace.

"It includes the compulsory power to fix wages without the consent of management or labor, to confiscate profits and to force involuntary servitude of labor," he said. "It would permit Government to break and destroy any management and business. It would permit Government to break and destroy any union.

"It is fundamentally contrary to our free way of life as to both management and labor. It is not a question of whether or not we believe that the present administration will not abuse its powers. It is a fundamental vital concept that Government should not have such powers.

"Any legislation which would socialize or autocratize powers over an individual citizen, or over his business or property, without due process.

"It is not necessary legislation and I am taking view opposite to labor-management situation in the country. The present emergencies can be resolved by an intelligent use of present powers which are still on the statute books and an essential new long-term labor policy, balanced, moderate, just and consistent with our basic principles should be enacted at an early date."

PEPPER'S SIX-HOUR TALK BLOCKS ACTION ON BILL

Washington, D. C.—Holding the Senate floor for six hours in a brilliant display of eloquence and hard-hitting common sense, Senator Claude Pepper of Florida staved off immediate action on President Truman's draft-labor bill and helped to swing the tide against it.

It was a modern version of Horatius at the Bridge.

The Florida Senator yielded only to questions and as the debate proceeded gained new allies among his more conservative colleagues as they began to realize the legislation endangered the free exercise of business as well as labor.

When he finally sat down at 11:15 P.M., Senator Pepper had earned the plaudits of the Senate and the thanks of organized labor.

HIGH COURT DENIES SUPER-SENIORITY

AFL Is Victorious in Contest Involving Job Status of Brooklyn Vet

Washington, D. C.—The Supreme Court of the United States cleared the way for rights given a veteran in his job by law, and said "supersenority" is not one of them.

The court said a veteran must be given his old job back, or one just as good. His time in the armed forces will count as time worked, for seniority purposes. He cannot be discharged for one year, but a layoff is not a discharge.

Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, Selective Service Director, ruled that a veteran, besides kill this, must have "superseniority"—that is, must have preference over nonveterans with more seniority.

Justice Douglas said for the court that the law did not support General Hershey's ruling.

The decision, however, was a clear-cut and complete victory for the American Federation of Labor, which filed a brief in the case. It involved the status of a veteran, Abraham Fishgold, who went back to his job as a welder at the Sullivan Dry Dock Corp. in Brooklyn after he was laid off for nine days. He sued the firm for his wages.

In this connection, Mr. Mitchell cited Section 9 (A) of the Hatch Act, which reads as follows:

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STONE AND WEBSTER YIELD TO ARCHITECTS' DEMANDS

Boston—Six hundred and twenty-five members of the International Federation of Technical Engineers', Architects' and Draftsmen's Union employed by Stone & Webster of this city were granted 10 to 20 percent across-the-board pay increases, in terms of a new contract. Minimum wages were raised 20 to 60 percent.

The new contract was agreed upon after a nine-week strike.

And there is no suggestion, said Douglas, that Congress sought to sweep aside the seniority rights. What it was trying to do was to give a veteran protection within the framework of the system.

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ATTENTION EDITORS

The usual printed Friday Supplement to the AFL's Weekly News Service will be omitted this week. However, a mimeographed supplement, containing the latest information on current labor matters, will be furnished to all labor papers to which the Friday Supplement is distributed. Publication of the usual printed Friday Supplement will be resumed on Friday, June 7, and thereafter.

Rail Strike Ends Quickly On Terms of President

Washington, D. C.—The ill-advised nation-wide railroad strike called by only two of the 20 railroad unions, ended suddenly when the leaders of the Independent Trainmen's and Engineers' Brotherhoods capitulated to President Truman's terms for an 18½-cent wage increase.

The other 18 rail unions, including all those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, had refused to strike and accepted the President's recommendations for settlement of the dispute several days earlier.

The strike lasted only 24 hours. While it effectively halted operation of passenger and freight trains for that period, the pressure brought to bear upon the two unions by the Government, plus the threat of drafting strikers into the armed services, forced A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, and Alvaney Johnston, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, to capitulate.

Return of the 327 railroads from Government seizure to private management was announced by the Office of Defense Transportation immediately following acceptance by the two unions of President Truman's terms.

Within 24 hours virtually normal service was restored throughout the Nation, passenger and freight trains were moving comparatively smoothly and perishable and emergency industrial shipments were flowing out of the terminals.

Announcing the release of the seized lines to private management, Col. J. Monroe Johnson, director of the ODT, cancelled the strike embargo on mail, freight and express shipments and announced other restrictions would be removed as fast as conditions permitted.

The 25 percent reduction in railroad passenger service, however, the ODT emphasized, will be continued until the coal situation is eased. Specifically lifted were orders for priorities on air travel, giving mail preference over passenger service and placing an embargo on freight and express.

Notice that the two striking unions had accepted the President's terms was delivered to Mr. Truman as he was addressing a joint session of Congress to ask "emergency legislation" to draft rail and other workers who struck against the Government.

Analysis of 'Get Labor' Bills Shows Vast Authority Sought By Truman

Washington, D. C.—Following is a summary of the Government draft-labor bill adopted by the House upon request of President Truman:

1.—It specifies the President may proclaim a national emergency at any time an interruption occurs in operation of any facility he deems "vitally necessary" to maintenance of the national economy.

2.—It gives the President power to draft into the armed forces within 24 hours of issuance of such a proclamation any individuals necessary to run such strike-bound plants during the existence of such an emergency.

3.—It takes away the seniority and re-employment rights of any workers refusing to work for the Government under such a proclamation.

4.—It makes labor officials subject to fine and imprisonment if they do anything to prevent resumption of work at Government-operated plants during the emergency.

5.—It gives the Federal courts authority to issue injunction against unions and to prohibit interference with the Federal operation.

President Truman advised Congress against enactment of hasty legislation penalizing labor and proposed a six-months study, by a joint Congressional committee, of labor-strike proposals to be submitted to Congress. Repudiating this advice, the Senate, within a few hours, adopted drastic amendments to the House-approved Case Bill, foremost among which were the following:

1.—Imposition of a cooling off period of 60 days in private industries and 65 days in utilities, during which mediation would be attempted.

2.—A prohibition against "secondary boycotts."

3.—Authorization for suits against unions for damages and to compel compliance.

4.—Adoption of the so-called "anti-racketeering" provisions of the Hobbs Bill, twice passed by the House.

5.—Imposition of a strict prohibition against exclusive union control of employe welfare funds.

President Truman, in his address to Congress, declared he was "most anxious" that nothing be done "to injure the cause of labor" and that "we must protect the workers whom we ask to remain on their jobs." He emphasized that "the general right of workers to strike against private employers must be preserved" but said he believed the time had come for a new study "of the whole subject of labor relations."

Green Demands Hearing

Washington, D. C.—Text of telegram sent to every member of the Senate by AFL President William Green calling for public hearings on the "draft labor" bill approved by the House follows:

I respectfully appeal to the members of the United States Senate to refer House Bill 6578, passed by the House of Representatives Saturday afternoon, May 25th, to the appropriate Senate committee for public hearings. Single handed action is unfair to such action.

The proposed legislation transgresses upon the sacred fundamental rights of labor. It provides for the drafting of workers into the armed forces. It restricts Government by injunction. It provides for criminal prosecution of workers under certain conditions and deprives workers of seniority rights earned over a long period of time.

The drafting of workers, the criminal procedure provided for under certain conditions in the legislation, is nothing less than the imposition of involuntary servitude. It seems inconceivable that the Senate of the United States would hastily pass such legislation without giving representatives of the workers an opportunity to present facts and information in opposition to such legislation.

This appeal is based upon the crying need for the extension of simple justice to millions of workers and the need for maintaining inviolate the sacred fundamental rights of these workers who cherish them as a common heritage.

Say, Listen!

Forthcoming radio programs in the "Cross Section—AFL" series broadcast each Saturday at 2:45 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, over the nation-wide Columbia Broadcasting System, are listed below for the information of trade unionists everywhere so that they can make advance plans to tune in:

June 1—Farmers. Members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters who operate over-the-road trucks in the mid-west area will be interviewed from a road-side lunchroom.

June 8—Printing trades. Edward J. Volz, President of the International Photo-Engravers Union and workers engaged in the various printing trades will be interviewed from the composing room of a newspaper in New York City.

June 15—Entertainment Trades. Officials of the various unions representing radio, theatrical and screen performers and workers, will describe the AFL's far-flung activities in these fields.

AFL Leads Desperate Fight To Defeat Anti-Labor Legislation and Obtains New Support From Liberals and Conservatives

Washington, D. C.—With organized labor fighting furiously for self-preservation, broad and powerful opposition swiftly mounted against President Truman's sudden demands for power to draft strikers into the Army and jail union leaders.

Condemning the President's program as a descent to "slave labor" and "nationalization of industry under Fascism," AFL President William Green launched a last-ditch defense of the freedom of American workers.

Congress was almost stampeded into immediate adoption of the legislation proposed by the President. In fact, the House of Representatives approved it by an overwhelming vote only two hours after Truman addressed a joint session of Congress.

But the abrupt ending of the railroad strike and reports of an approaching settlement of the nation-wide coal dispute cooled off the hotheads in the Senate. Liberals who are friendly to labor and conservatives who fear the effects of such legislation on private industry joined ranks in forcing a debate which will delay final action perhaps a week and may finally kill the measure.

But there is no time to lose! The slave labor bill is a blow from which free American workers can never recover! Don't wait! Wire your Senators immediately in opposition to this dangerous bill!

Evidence that the deliberate Senate can no longer be relied upon to rescue labor from ill-advised anti-labor legislation initiated by the House of Representatives, was its shocking passage of sweeping, restrictive amendments to the Case Bill. This, in itself, is President Green pointed out, was a flat repudiation of Truman's program. The President urged Congress to hold off action on permanent labor legislation until after a six months' study by a joint Congressional Committee and proposed his draft-labor bill as a temporary stopgap to check strikes threatening the Nation's economy.

The procession of startling developments which transformed the nation's labor picture over a single weekend can be summed up as follows:

1—At 4 P.M. on Friday May 25 two independent railroad brotherhoods—the Trainmen and the Engineers—put into effect a nation-wide railroad strike crippling vital transportation.

2—That same night President Truman went on the air to denounce strikes against the Government and threatened immediate "tough" action.

3—The following afternoon the President appeared before a joint session of Congress and asked emergency legislation that would empower him to place strike leaders in jail, seek court injunction against strikes and draft striking workers into the armed forces to work under compulsion and on the Government's own terms.

4—In the midst of his speech, the President dramatically announced termination of the railroad strike.

5—Two hours later, nevertheless, the House of Representatives passed his emergency bill.

6—The Senate, in night session, refused to act immediately on the emergency bill, but instead adopted a whole cluster of harsh amendments to the Case Bill.

7—On Monday the House of Representatives refused to accept the Senate amendments and the Case Bill may go to conference, with the possibility of a Presidential veto even if a compromise bill is agreed upon.

8—AFL President William Green rallied the forces of organized labor and after a joint legislative conference between AFL and railroad union representatives, dispatched an urgent telegram to all Senators demanding that the emergency bill be sent back to committee so that labor could be given an opportunity to present its opposition at public hearings.

9—The AFL chief also issued a public statement, widely published in the press, denouncing the provisions of the emergency bill and branding the Senate-approved amendments to the Case Bill as the "worst type of vengeful and hysterical legislation."

10—Senator Claude Pepper of Florida launched a last-ditch fight against the emergency bill on the Senate floor with a six-hour speech ripping the proposed measure to shreds.

11—As the debate proceeded, conservative Senators swung over into the opposition camp and observers generally predicted that the bill would be killed by a highly encouraging trend.

12—Senator Morse of Oregon declared on the Senate floor that the sudden transformation of the House of Labor and rallied many Truman into a big, bad wolf was the worst "exhibition of ham acting" he had ever seen.

Green Hits Anti-Labor Bills

Washington, D. C.—Text of statement by AFL President William Green condemning each legislation as the Case and Government seizure bills follows:

Half of President Truman's two-fold program for labor legislation already has been repudiated by Congress. Only a few hours after the President appealed to Congress to refrain from acting on permanent labor legislation until after a six months' study by a joint Congressional Committees, a Senate coalition of Southern Democrats and reactionary Republicans on Saturday night forced adoption of a drastic anti-labor bill. Since the House had previously adopted a similar bill, there is no exaggeration to state that the President's program has been wrecked.

The Case Bill, as approved by the House and amended by the Senate, represents the worst type of vengeful and hysterical legislation and if enacted without reservation that if it becomes law, labor relations throughout American industry will be disrupted. It constitutes an open invitation to hostile employers to go out and destroy trade unions at their pleasure. The workers of America will never willingly accept such a one-sided law.

The President's second recommendation, while narrower in scope, is even more dangerous to the fundamental freedoms of American workers than the Case bills. It ranges the Government on the side of private industry against labor. It flies in the face of the fact that if a group of workers cannot or will not enter into a collective bargaining contract with a union, the Government will take over and operate the plant for them, even to the extent of drafting workers into the Army under conditions of involuntary servitude if necessary to compel submission.

The public interest will not be served by such methods. The public interest will not be served by enacting the Government seizure bill to recalcitrant employers and crack down on workers who have just grievances.

The American Federation of Labor cautions Congress and the President not to take action so unfair carelessly before dealing with this program. It it is put into effect, Fascism may grip America unawares.

Even the effects of a nation-wide strike on a vital industry could not be as permanently disastrous to our economy or to the American way of life as slave labor and the nationalization of industry. Yet these are the inevitable consequences of the proposed legislation.

To compel free workers to remain on the job against their will by drafting them into the armed forces and making them subject to court martial if they refuse is to reduce labor under Fascism.

To seize private industry and operate it as long as no agreement is reached on a new labor contract constitutes nationalization of industry, not under Socialism, but under Fascism.

The American Federation of Labor, founded upon the principle of voluntarism and pledged to first and full allegiance to the principles of American democracy, will resist such punitive, repressive and un-American legislation as the Case Bill and the Government Seizure Bill to its last breath.

GREEN PLEDGES AFL AID FOR JEWISH DESTITUTE

New York, N. Y.—At a meeting held here to aid destitute Jewish refugees in Europe, William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, urged Americans of all faiths to support the campaign to raise $100,000,000.

The urgency of the needs of 1,400,000 Jewish refugees in Europe, Green stressed and Mr. Green promised full support of his organization's plan to drive for relief, rehabilitation and resettlement.

TEAMSTERS WIN RAISE

Kansas City, Mo.—The International Brotherhood of Teamsters have won an increase of from 8½ cents an hour to 11 cents with an eight-hour week-day guarantee and a 40-hour week.

BAMBERGER GRANTS RAISE

Newark, N. J.—A contract signed by L. Bamberger & Company with AFL union representatives calls for a $4-a-week raise for 3,500 full-time employes. This contract is retroactive to March 4.